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THE

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CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Evangelical Missionary Society

IN

MASSACHUSETTS.

Worcester :

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JANUARY, 1818.

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PREFACE.

THE EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY was formed in 1807. It was originally limited to the Counties of Worcester and Middlesex. Its object was to provide the destitute inhabitants of our own country with the means of Christian instruction and moral improvement. They to whose management the pious and charitable purposes of the Institution were first committed, were apprized that its utility must in a great measure depend upon the manner in which the assigned duties should be executed. They deeply felt the importance of their trust, and on the result of the most serious deliberation adopted their system of measures. The history of Christianity taught them, that the ordinary effects of our religion are to be expected from the stated ministrations of the gospel. Instead, therefore, of embracing an extended field of missionary labour, and countenancing people to depend on occasional preaching, they selected, on due inquiry, the most suitable places, to which they exclusively limited the stated services of their Missionaries; and they authorized them to give assurances to the people who attended upon their labours, and manifested a disposition to maintain the regular ministrations of the gospel, that the Society would aid them in gathering a church and supporting a minister. This encouragement was given, in the expectation that the many advantages resulting from the publick institutions of the gospel, under the Divine blessing, would be the means to increase the population, and promote union and harmony in the places where these were enjoyed; and that the people thus benefited would, in a short period of time, be able and willing to bear the whole expense of the establishment. The Trustees being then at liberty to direct their attention and charity to other destitute places, indulged the hope, that under Divine Providence they might be instrumental, according to the means of the Society, in erecting regular churches and establishing evangelical ministers in succession among people, who, without their assistance, must long have been destitute of these blessings.

In pursuance of the plan, instructions were given to Missionaries cautiously to avoid interference with ordained ministers, and with those preachers who were acting under the auspices of other Missionary Societies. These Missionaries were also requested, as on

portunity presented, to give their assistance in the instruction and superintendence of schools; and a proportion of the means of the Society has annually been appropriated to aid in the support of competent instructors of children and youth in places where the people were unable themselves to defray the whole expense.

Many school-books, catechisms, and valuable publications on the great truths of the gospel and on the important duties of the Christian character, have been presented to the Society by individuals, which they have distributed under the direction of their Missionaries and School-Masters.

The missionaries employed proved faithful to their trust, God smiled upon their labours, and the publick were informed of the success with which the humble endeavours of the Society were attended, by their printed Reports. An act of incorporation was deemed expedient, which was applied for and obtained from the Legislature of the Commonwealth.

Experience led to some improvement of the original system, which was established by the votes of the Society in conformity to the principles of the association; particularly to the appointment of a standing committee, to appropriate such donations as individuals might make to promote the general purposes of a foreign mission. These votes in substance are introduced as distinct articles of the Constitution.

A number of respectable gentlemen, not resident in the Counties of Middlesex and Worcester, approving the plan of the Society, and expressing a desire that its numbers might be augmented, and its efficiency increased, proposed that the Society be opened for the admission of all in the Commonwealth who might be disposed to promote its objects. A committee was accordingly appointed to take the proposal into consideration. This committee, at the last annual meeting, reported in favour of the measure. The Society unanimously accepted the report, and appointed the subscribers a committee to revise and alter the Constitution in conformity to it. They have attended to the service assigned them, and present to the acceptance of the Society the revised Constitution.

A ARON BANCROFT,
JOSEPH ALLEN.

Worcester, January, 1818.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. THE Society shall be styled *The Evangelical Missionary Society in Massachusetts.*

ART. 2. The great object of this Society is to furnish to the destitute inhabitants of our own country, the means of Christian instruction and moral improvement.

ART. 3. The Society shall consist of all persons who shall subscribe this Constitution, pay one dollar into the Treasury, and the same sum annually for promoting the purposes of the Institution ; and of such Churches as shall annually choose a member to represent them and pay the annual contribution.

ART. 4. The Officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, and twelve Trustees, to be chosen by ballot at the annual meeting. Six of the Trustees, at least, shall be gentlemen in civil life. The President and Vice-President shall ex officio be of the Board.

ART. 5. The duty of the President, and in his absence of the Vice-President, shall be, to regulate the meetings of the Society ; and of the Trustees, any five of whom shall form a quorum. All meet-

ings of the Society and of the Trustees shall be opened by prayer.

ART. 6. It shall be the duty of the Treasurers to receive all monies paid by the members, and all donations and collections; to keep a fair account, and to exhibit it at the annual meeting. The books and accounts of the Treasurers may be inspected by any member. The Treasurers shall give bonds, to the satisfaction of the Trustees, for the faithful discharge of their duty.

ART. 7. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to record the names of the members, keep accurate records of the proceedings of the Society, and exhibit them at every annual meeting. The records may be inspected by the members.

ART. 8. The duty of the Corresponding Secretary shall be to correspond with other Missionary Societies, and individuals, agreeably to the direction of the Society or Trustees; to preserve on file official communications, and all papers entrusted to him, and to transcribe such as may be required by the Trustees.

ART. 9. The power and duty of the Trustees shall be, to carry into effect the design of this Institution; to regulate their own meetings; to appoint a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, in case of vacancy in either of those offices, or of incapacity of such Officers, to serve until the next annual meeting; to require the attendance of the Secretaries to act officially at their board; to call upon the Treasurers to exhibit their books and accounts; to receipt for all monies by them received, and to use and apply with

economy all monies and other property ; to appoint, contract with, direct, send, and recal Missionaries, Catechists, and School-Masters ; to procure and disperse copies of the Holy Bible, other pious and useful books, and also school books ; and, when necessary, to call special meetings of the Society.

ART. 10. The Trustees shall meet twice in each year, and at such other times as they shall think expedient.

ART. 11. The Trustees, at every annual meeting, shall report their doings in the preceding year, and propose such measures as they may deem useful and necessary.

ART. 12. This Society resolve, that no persons shall be employed as Missionaries, but such as are "sound in the faith once delivered to the saints," approved for their knowledge, prudence and piety, animated with Christian zeal, diligent in their proper calling, and ready "to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

ART. 13. As the design of the Society is to aid similar Societies in disseminating "the knowledge of the only living and true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, whom to know is life eternal," so it will ever be ready to encourage and unite with them in measures for this important purpose, and to form the closest connexion with them.

ART. 14. There shall be an annual meeting of the Society in Boston on the First Thursday in October, at such place and hour as the Trustees may direct. At this meeting all the Officers of the Society shall be elected, and a first and second Preacher appointed.

ART. 15. There shall be a semiannual meeting of the Society, at such time and place as the Trustees may direct. At the annual and semiannual meetings, a discourse shall be delivered, and a collection had to promote the objects of the Institution. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to appoint the Preacher at the semiannual meeting, and to give notice of all the meetings of the Society, by a publication in such newspapers as they deem necessary.

ART. 16. There shall be a Committee of seven members, to be denominated the Committee for Foreign Mission, whose duty it shall be to receive and appropriate, under the control of the Society, all such monies as may be designated by the donors for the support of Missionaries out of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and for the distribution of Bibles and Tracts given for foreign purposes.

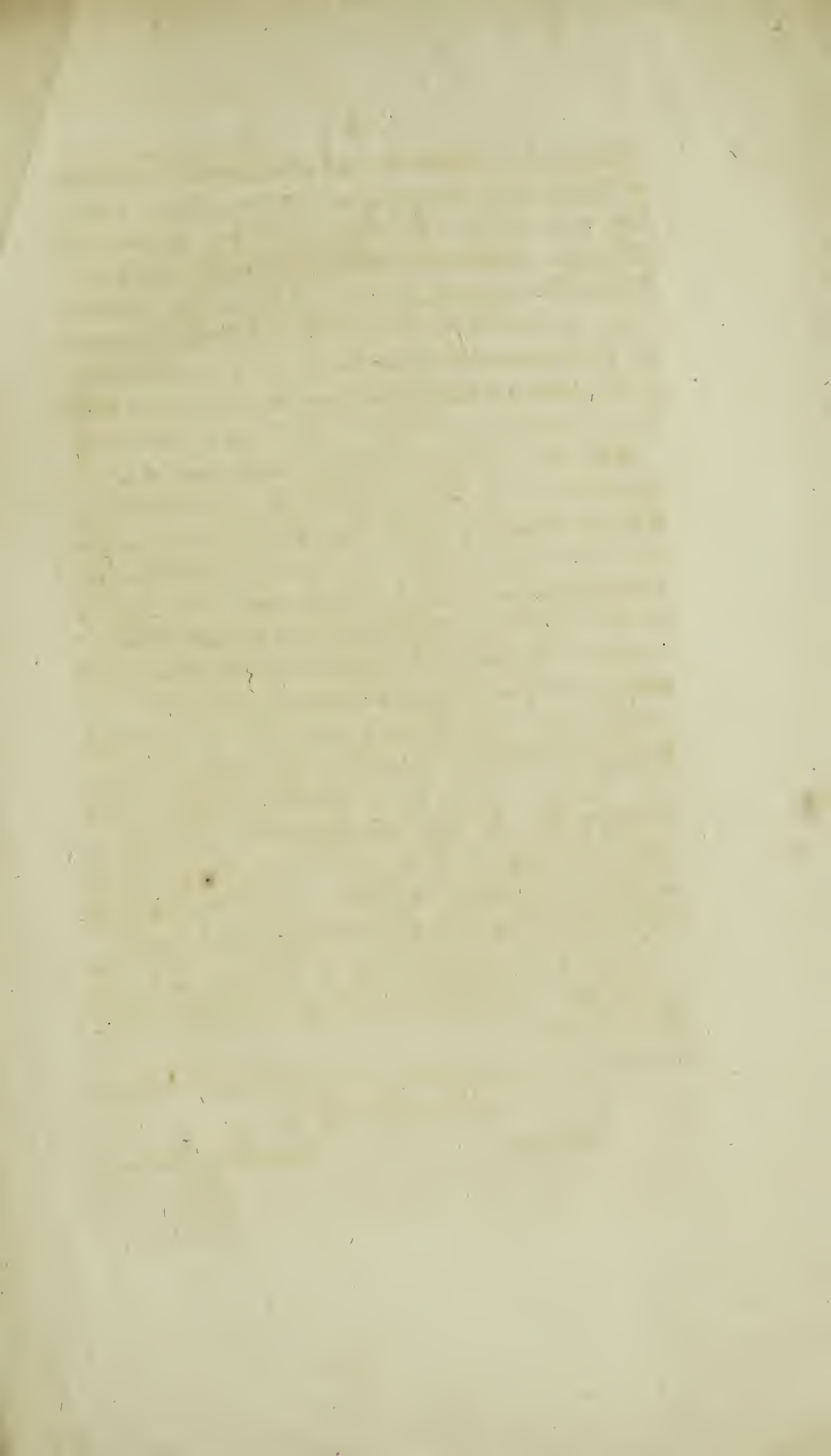
ART. 17. All questions before the Society shall be determined by a majority of the members present, except such as relate to the altering of this Constitution. If any amendment be desired, it may be proposed at the annual meeting; but it shall not be adopted until the next, nor then without the consent of two-thirds of the members present.

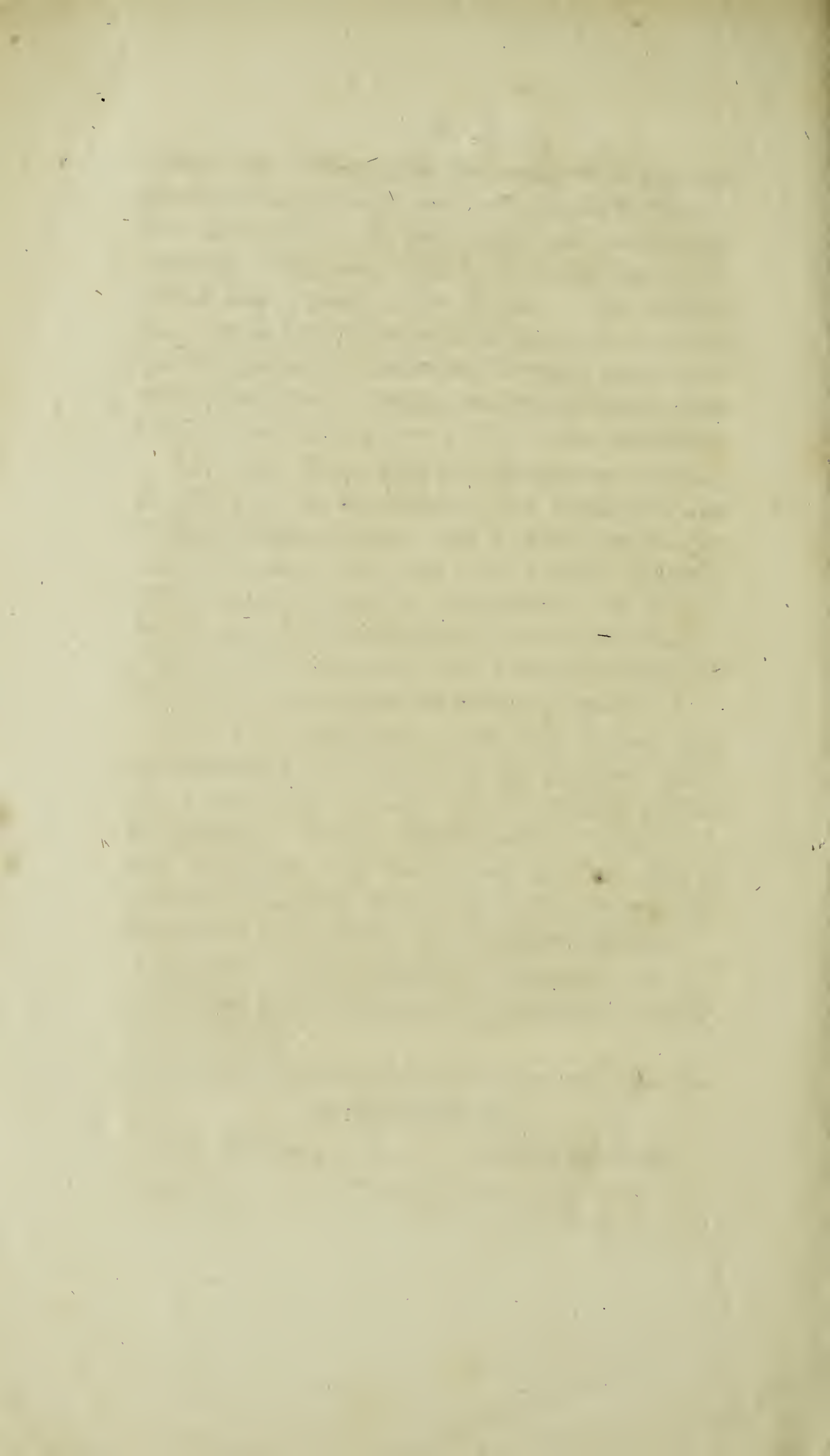
ART. 18. As this Society is voluntary, it is expected that all the Officers will gratuitously render their services.

SUBSCRIBERS.

Names.

Places of Abode.





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